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SUBJECT: Bi-weekly Review - March 1 through March 15

POLITICAL

Meetings of Federal and Regional Legislatures (UNCLASSIFIED)

Budget meetings of the Houses of Assembly in the Western Region and the Cameroons convened on March 1, while the Northern and Federal Houses met on March 8. Opening of the Eastern Regional House was delayed until March 10 by a disagreement between the East's Governor and his Council of Ministers over certain sections of the Region's appropriation bill.

Federal

In his last speech to the Federal House before his retirement in April, Governor General Sir John MACPHERSON outlined the Federal Economic program of his Council of Ministers and appended his personal regret at leaving Nigeria (See D-134, March 9, 1955). Northern and Eastern members of the Government in the House devoted most of the next two days to speeches in praise of Sir John's "political wisdom" and "devotion to Nigeria". Opposition leader AKINTOLA was mildly critical of both Sir John's speech and his record, terming the former disappointing and uninspired, and stating that "if Sir John Macpherson has been a great man, as has been stated (by other speakers), may God grant it that Nigeria may have a greater man in his successor".

A total of 105 member's questions and 25 private motions are scheduled for the present session of the Federal House. Chief S. L. Akintola, former Federal Minister of Health and now leader of the opposition, has submitted 89 of the questions and 11 of the motions. The AG's Jaja WACHUKU will table a motion asking that the Council of Ministers establish a Department of External Affairs and that they petition the Queen for the provision of an office of Prime Minister of the Federation.

Ten government bills, including the 1955-56 appropriation bill, will be considered by the House; among the most important are bills establishing the Nigerian Railway as a government corporation, a public order bill revising regulations relating to freedom of

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assembly and an amendment to the present Shipping and Navigation Ordinance.

The present House is smaller by two members than at its first meeting. H.O. DAVIES (NCNC), A.P.U. EKONG (AG), and S.J. UNA (UNIP/AG) have lost their seats through legal action subsequent to the election; one NPC member has resigned for medical reasons. Two members, Federal Chief Secretary Sir Hugo MARSHALL and Malam Yahaya GUSAU (NPC), who were abroad at the time of the first House meeting, have taken their seats.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

To date, Federal House members have shown more interest in heckling and political name calling than in considered debate or action on the measures before them. During Financial Secretary ROBERTSON'S presentation of the budget, both Government and opposition members were patently unable or unwilling to follow his resume of the government's financial condition and budget proposals. This attitude of indifference is in a major part the result of the inexperience and lack of qualifications of the new House's membership, but it also reflects the prevalent attitude that nothing of real importance will emerge from the House's action.

Although little legislative action has yet been effected, Government leaders hope to complete the House's business by April 6 or 7.

Western

In addition to the general Appropriation Bill, the Western Regional House considered the following Government-introduced bills: a Regional lottery; the establishment of a Regional production and Development Board; measures revising existing legislation concerning the administration of local government and the succession of chiefs; and a bill to revise the process for collecting direct taxes. In the March 5 meeting of the Western House of Assembly, the NCNC opposition made a startling switch in tactics. In giving general support to the appropriations bill, NCNC speakers, including Chief Whip C.N. EDWUYASI and opposition leader Dennis OSADEBAY, praised AWOLOWO's budget speech and indicated opposition approval of the Premier and his government. NCNC speakers admitted that both parties had "played politics" with the minimum wage issue and that it was the government's duty "to educate workers that there is a purse from which national commitments would be met and that such purse was not bottomless".

AG press gave heavy play to Awolowo's statement in the Western House that expenditures in the Benin/Delta Provinces are budgeted for a considerably

for a considerably higher amount than the revenue expected from the area. He stated that the budget forecasts income from the area during the next fiscal year of approximately £2.3 million against expenditures of £4.3 million.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The Premier's remarks may be interpreted as an attempt to convince would-be secessionists that the Delta receives financial subsidy from the Regional Government. It may also be a move to prepare AG members for the eventual loss of the provinces by showing them as an economic liability.

Whatever the Premier's motive, both groups must face the fact that geographical and climatic conditions preclude significant cocoa production in the Delta area, and that in consequence the Benin/Delta cannot produce a taxable base equivalent to the cocoa-growing provinces.

Northern

There has been little of interest in the deliberations of the Northern House other than the legislature's prompt action in following the Federal House's example in increasing the salaries of House members and ministers. Many of the speeches by NPC leaders, including those of the Northern Premier, the Sadauna of Sokotu, have been characteristically anti-Southern in tone.

Some dissent against prevailing Northern policy has been registered by Plateau and Middle Belt representatives who have questionned the Premier's desire to obtain expatriate officials rather than employ qualified Nigerian administrators from other Regions, and have advocated the 1956 elections in the North.

Eastern

The chief indication of tension has occurred in the East, where Governor Sir Clem PLEASS officially informed the Eastern House that certain clauses of the appropriation bill (providing for the abolition of expatriation allowances for some vacant senior administrative positions and requiring a minimum number of African permanent secretaries) were unacceptable and subject to his reserved powers. At last report Premier Azikiwe and his ministers declared themselves unwilling to modify the controversial clauses. If no solution can be found and the bill is passed in its present form by the Regional House, the question of its legality would then be referred to the Secretary of State in London.

Prior to the Eastern House's opening, a meeting of Eastern Chiefs and natural rulers registered their objection to the provisions of the proposed Eastern Nigerian Local Government Law. They claimed that the new law excluded them from positions of administrative authority on local councils established by the bill. The meeting approved a resolution appointing a team of chiefs to tour the Region in an effort to establish an effective organization of the Region's "natural rulers".

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Resignation of Nigerian Commissioner in London (UNCLASSIFIED)

Mr. E. K. FEATHERSTONE, Nigerian Commissioner in London, has resigned his post because of ill health. Although no successor has yet been announced, AG papers have alleged that the NCNC majority in the Federal Council of Ministers will give the job to Chief H.O.DAVIES, recently ousted from his House seat (see above).

Ibadan Chieftaincy Dispute (UNCLASSIFIED)

The storm over the occupancy of the principal Obaship of Ibadan (See p.2, D-126, Feb. 28, 1955) was finally resolved when Chief AKINYO, the NCNC-installed pretender, publically acknowledged the legitimacy of Chief AKINYELE's installation and accepted a position as the second-ranking Oba in the native hierarchy.

Calabar-Ogoja-River State (UNCLASSIFIED)

A meeting of political leaders and native chieftains resolved to seek the creation of a separate state from the present Eastern Region's Calabar-Ogoja and Rivers provinces when the 1956 Constitutional conference is convened. In its resolution the conference announced the establishment of a new political organization, the Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers State Movement, and declared that Nigeria could not become a true federation until and unless the existing Regions were subdivided into smaller states. The resolution stated that the new movement would seek to allign itself with the independence movement advocated by group in the Delta area of the Southeastern section of the Western Region.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

The tribes of the densely populated areas near the mouths of the Niger are economically and culturally distinct from the Yoruba and Ibo tribes which dominate the Western and Eastern Regions, respectively. The areas' strong desire for autonomy is fanned by NCNC political activity to the West of the Niger and AG/UNIP propaganda in the Eastern Region.

Relations With Islam (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Premier of Northern Nigeria has announced that he will visit Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan in April of this year and that other Northern Ministers will travel to Moslem countries when funds and suitable opportunities become available. Dr. MADEKE, accredited representative of the International World Islamic Congress, has established headquarters at Kaduna for what the press has reported as "a religious mission for the unification of Moslems through West Africa.".

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Death of Archbishop Vining (UNCLASSIFIED)

Archbishop L. G. Vining, appointed first Anglican Archbishop of West Africa in 1951, died at sea on March 11 as he was returning to the UK for medical leave. His burial service at Freetown was attended by the Governor of Sierra Leone and Lady Hall.

LABOR

Minimum Wage Controversy (UNCLASSIFIED)

The outcry against the minimum wage levels announced by the Federal and Eastern Regions last month has been carried into the Regional legislatures. In criticizing the Governor General's speech from the throne, opposition leader Akintola scored the omission of any reference to the wage issue. He declared himself unable to understand the government's argument that higher minimum wage levels would breed inflation when the government simultaneously approved large increases in the salaries of ministers and representatives. He termed the Federation "a government of the people, by the rascals, for the rich".

Railway Workers Union Conference (UNCLASSIFIED)

In its 11th Annual Conference, the Railway Workers Union, Nigeria's largest and oldest union body, adopted the following resolutions:

1. That the All Nigerian Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) inaugurate a political party to be known as the Nigeria Labor Party.

2. That the recent increase in laborer's wages be rejected and ANTUF instructed to take active steps to see that laborers receive a 9 shilling daily minimum.

3. That ANTUF be called upon to order its leaders to resign membership in any political party and to request similar action by the leaders of other trade unions.

4. That the Union was opposed to a clause in the draft bill of the proposed Nigerian Railway Corporation which provides for the drafting of railway workers by the Federal Government under certain conditions.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Many Nigerian trade union leaders are members of the NCNC. With some justification, independent and AG-influenced labor spokesmen have claimed

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that NCNC influence in ANTUF has restricted labor activities. A government labor official has informed the Consulate General that he does not believe there is a likelihood that a labor party will be established at this time.

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EDUCATION

Northern Scholarships (UNCLASSIFIED)

In rendering an accounting for the Federal £200,000 educational grant to the Region, the Northern Government has stated that 394 scholarships have been awarded on a merit basis during the period July 1952 - March 1955. An additional 120 awards are budgeted for the next fiscal year.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Half of the scholarships were for study within Nigeria, and most of the remainder for the U.K. Despite extensive propaganda efforts by the Egyptian Government, only 3 students were sent to Cairo. The absence of any awards to American schools is in continuance of a regional policy largely resultant from the dominant British administrative influence and the absence of American missionary schools and hospitals in Northern Moslem areas.

Lack of qualified applicants rather than funds dictated the small number of scholarships, most of which were for teacher training.

Eastern Regional Scholarship Announcement (UNCLASSIFIED)

Enugu has released the names of 334 awardees for post-secondary technical or arts study overseas. Less than one fourth (72) were awarded from an overall region-wide screening, the remainder being chosen by the six respective divisions (138) and by scholarship allocations to secondary schools within the region (103).

Since some of the divisions were unable to supply their quota of candidates holding an acceptable secondary degree, they were permitted to convert the award for use at the secondary level.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Many of the grantees are already overseas as private students or recipients of previous awards which have expired.

The majority of the 400-odd Nigerian students now in the U.S. are Easterners.

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ECONOMIC

Federal Budget (UNCLASSIFIED)

In opening the Budget Debate in the Federal House of Representatives, the Financial Secretary described the 1955-56 Estimate as a "consolidation budget". The Estimate is for £46,852,500. He explained that consolidation was necessary because, due to the recent constitutional changes, it was not possible now to determine just what the Federal Government's new liabilities will be, nor how its revenue will fare. The chief aim of the coming financial year must be to maintain establishments and services at approximately the same level as in the latter half of 1954 - 55. Proposals involving increased expenditure could only be considered if either equivalent savings were offered or the increased expenditure would be offset by increased revenue directly attributable to the expenditure; or if the increased expenditure was immediately required in the public interest.

Summarizing the general economic position of the country he said that while there is little room for complacency, there is certainly no ground for undue pessimism in regard to the present or the foreseeable future.

The Financial Secretary outlined the less favorable aspects as being:

1. Under-expenditure on capital works because of shortage of supervisory staff. Out of £3.84 million in the revised 1954-55 estimate for Public Works Extraordinary, under £2.0 will be expended by March 31, 1955.

2. Indications that prices obtained for Nigerian exports in the near future are more likely to fall than to rise.

3. Lack of indications that Nigeria will be able to offset, by a corresponding rise in the production of main crops, the effect of the anticipated fall in prices.

The bright spot in the economic outlook is the signs of new economic activities, of new ventures as well as improvements to old established industries, which serve to strengthen and broaden the base upon which the economy of the country rests. Specifically, he mentioned:

1. New industrial enterprises such as textile mills, shoe factory, rubber factory, boat building yards, cement factory.

2. New

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2. New plantation ventures

3. Exploitation of new columbite deposits and oil exploration

4. Railway extension surveys

5. Wharf extensions at Apapa and Port H. ourt.

Debate on the budget is continuing.

A bill has also been presented to the House for the approval of the additional expenditure of £10.1 million made by the Federal Government as a supplement to the 1953-54 Budget Appropriation of £47.7 million.

Regional Budgets (UNCLASSIFIED)

Western Region

The Western House of Assembly has passed the Appropriation Bill for £12,388,550. This included an additional sum of £197,420 which was added to the original estimate of £12,191,130. In presenting the budget, the Premier and Minister of Finance laid stress on the high proportion of expenditure set aside for "services and projects which directly cater for the health, education, prosperity, and general welfare" of the people. He stated that not less than 82.6% is devoted to such services. Of this percentage, 27.8% is for education, 10.7% for medical services, 20.2% for public works, 5.4% for agricultural services, and 18.5% for various other benefits accruing to the public.

Referring to the recommendations of the World Bank Report, the Finance Minister stated that the report estimated expenditure for the Region for the period 1955-60 for economic development to be £35.7 million for Recurrent Expenditure and £22.4 million for Capital expenditure. He pointed out, however, that his Government is already committed to more ambitious schemes than the ones recommended by the Bank Mission Report, particularly in regard to education, road program, provision of hospital facilities, and urban water supply. These ambitious programs would require the Government to find considerably increased levels of income. After running through the various possible sources of revenue he deplored a "persistent clamor for amenities coupled with a definite reluctance to contribute towards their provision", and pleaded for a sense of greater responsibility and duty in payment of taxes.

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Northern Region

The Northern House of Assembly has passed its appropriation bill for £12,377,019. The Financial Secretary stated, in introducing the bill, that estimated Government surplus at March 31, 1955, would be £6.3 million. He stated that taxation has not kept pace with the rise in money incomes and that development will call for steadily rising rates of taxation. He indicated that there had been a good general level of prosperity and the volume of internal trade during the past year was high, although there had been price reductions in some important items of trade, and food shortages and fear of famine apparently restricted the flow of money in the country districts. Promising starts had been made in industrial development which reflect confidence of investors in the future of the Region and its stability as an area for development. He concluded that if the Region is successful in increasing its agricultural production it will be able to finance its development program.

Eastern Region

The Eastern Region Minister of Finance introduced the Regional Appropriation Bill for £7,130,855. He described it as a "Spring-Board Budget". The Minister stated that it would be unwise to budget for a deficit nor would he advise deficit budgeting for a long time to come. He believed a well balanced budget and a healthy reserve were essential for the Region to establish credit to obtain and service loans. He made reference to the economic development of the Region but stated that it was premature to disclose details of the five-year development plan. Debate on the bill is continuing.

Southern Cameroons

The Southern Cameroons House of Assembly has passed its Appropriation Bill for £1,112,745. The largest single item of expenditure is for education, £248,645. Other important items are £155,525 for medical services and £50,000 for roads. The Financial and Development Secretary stated that a heavy extra burden had been placed upon the territory because the provision for the first time of Judicial, Printing and Information Services. To help meet increased commitments capitation tax is to be increased from 5 pence to 2 shillings and 6 pence per adult male.

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AGRICULTURE

Cattle Population (UNCLASSIFIED)

It is officially estimated that there are approximately 6 million head of cattle in Nigeria. Of these, about 5 million are raised in the Northern Region and are chiefly the large humped Zebu cattle. The Eastern and Western Regions each have about 1/2 million of the small non-humped Muturu cattle. Most of the Muturu cattle are used for bride price and for slaughter at ceremonial occasions, and almost none are slaughtered for market. Each of the two Southern Regions buys for market about 100,000 head of cattle a year from the Northern Fulani herdsmen. Almost all the Murutu cattle in the South are untended and roam freely in the bush. To date, efforts to introduce systematic cattle growing in the Southern Regions have not been successful.

Banana Crop Damage (UNCLASSIFIED)

A series of tornadoes which recently struck the Tiko area of the Southern Cameroons has caused considerable crop damage. It is estimated that banana producers have suffered the loss of over a million stems.

Rice Pilot Scheme (UNCLASSIFIED)

A pilot project in mechanized rice production initiated by the Northern Region Agricultural Department is reported to be very encouraging. Started in 1952 at Jere, near Maiduguri, the project is aimed at exploring the possibility of large scale mechanized rice growing on 20,000 acres of river valley that are flooded during the rains. It is stated that if the scheme survives and expands to the required limit it should help the peasants of the area in cultivating at least 5,000 tons of paddy every year.

INDUSTRY

New Industry in Northern Region (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Minister of Trade and Industry for the Northern Region has stated in the House of Assembly that among the proposals the Government is considering to establish industries in the Region are:

1. The manufacture of cotton wool (absorbent cotton) for medical purposes.

2. Establishment of

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2. Establishment of a textile mill in Kaduna.

3. Establishment of a sack factory to use Rama fiber.

4. Construction of an experimental mill for cornflour.

5. Enlargement of the Vom Dairy to produce dried milk.

British Industry Federation Visit (UNCLASSIFIED)

It is announced in the press that Sir Percival GRIFFITHS will visit Nigeria and the Gold Coast at the invitation of the Federation of British Industries, accompanied by Mr. Maurice WATT, an official of that organization. They will arrive next week, spend about a month in Nigeria before going to the Gold Coast. The purpose of their visit is to "recommend any measure that can be taken to further the mutual interests of these countries and the United Kingdom in trade, industry and commerce." Sir Percival is a retired Indian Civil Servant, director of several companies, and is active in numerous associations.

NIGERIAN MERCHANT MARINE TRAINING (UNCLASSIFIED)

Reorganization has been completed of the training of Merchant Marine students, known as the Nigeria Marine. Training is now organized into two branches, the Executive and the Mechanical. The Executive Branch trains cadets, ordinary seamen and signalmen. Cadet training includes physical training, practical training to the level of competence of able seaman, and general education to qualify for the U.K. Ministry of Transport Certificate of 2nd Mate. Elder Dempster Lines and Palm Lines have entered into agreements to accept Nigeria Marine Cadets and to give them the same training as Merchant Navy Cadets. Ordinary Seamen and Signalmen will receive approximately a year's training to the level of competence of Able Seamen and Signalmen. The Mechanical Branch trains Engineering Cadets, Mechanical and Constructional Draughtsmen and Craftsmen Apprentices. Engineering Cadets will receive training to qualify for Certificate of Competency as 1st and 2nd Class Engineers.

MEDICAL SERVICES (UNCLASSIFIED)

In a white paper submitted to the House of Representatives this week the Federal Minister of Natural Resources and Social Welfare outlined a scheme for the development of medical and health services in Lagos which will require a capital expenditure of £3.7 million. The main portion of the expenditure will be for expanded hospital and clinic facilities and nurses training facilities. In addition, £3.8 million will be spent for expansion of training facilities for medical technicians to serve the country as a whole. Schools are to be constructed to train radiographers, dental hygienists and dental technical assistants, physiotherapists and medical laboratory technologists.

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Miscellaneous Office Activities (UNCLASSIFIED)

During the period under review the Consulate General assisted the following American visitors:

Mr. Jesse F. CORNISH, Mankato, Minnesota. Mr. Cornish operates an import business and consulted the Consulate General concerning increasing his imports of Nigerian sculpture and handicraft.

Mr. J. R. MIGLIETTA, Kennecott Copper Corporation. Mr. Miglietta is visiting Nigeria to investigate the possibilities of the purchase by Kennecott of a columbite mining company in the Jos (Plateau) area in Northern Nigeria.

Dr. George ADAMS, U.S. Public Health Officer (see P.7, D-126, Feb. 28, 1955). In a four day trip to the Eastern Region Dr. Adams discussed FOA assistance for the East's hospital program with Eastern Minister of Health OGBARA and Premier Nnamdi AZIKIWE. The hospitals concerned are located at Unuahia and Aba; the project envisaged concerns nurses training.

Edward D. McLaughlin
American Consul General

Department please pouch copies to Accra, Dakar, London and Leopoldville.

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